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ART. V.—*The Heavenly Doctrine of the New Jerusalem as revealed from Heaven. From the Latin of Emanuel Swedenborg.* 2d American edition. Hilliard & Metcalf, 1820, pp. 99.

EMANUEL SWEDENBORG, whose name and writings have lately attracted more attention, in this vicinity, than heretofore, was born at Upsal, in Sweden, on the 29th of January, 1688. No *memorabilia* have yet transpired respecting his infancy; but he was early distinguished for his knowledge in mathematics, astronomy, and physical science; and for numerous writings on those subjects. He was always, as far as we can learn, respected and beloved for the excellence of his character; and previous to his spiritual visions, he had become known, in other countries beside his own, by his travels through a great part of Europe.

It was about the year 1740, that he is said to have relinquished temporal for spiritual concerns; and in 1745 he received the first commands and favours from heaven, with which he afterwards maintained an every-day familiarity. The following is the account which he gives of his first call from Deity. It is in a letter to Mr. Robsam, in the preface to the treatise of Heaven and Hell.

‘I dined very late at my lodgings at London, and ate with great appetite, till, at the close of my repast, I perceived a kind of mist about my eyes, and the floor of my chamber was covered with hideous reptiles. They soon disappeared, the darkness was dissipated, and I saw clearly in the midst of a brilliant light, a man seated in the corner of the chamber, who said to me in a terrible voice: *eat not so much*. At those words my sight became obscured; afterwards it became clear by degrees, and I found myself alone. The night following, the same man, radiant with light, appeared to me and said, “I am God, the Lord, creator and redeemer; I have chosen you to unfold to men the internal and spiritual sense of the sacred writings, and will dictate to you what you are to write.” At that time I was not terrified; and the light, although very brilliant, made no unpleasant impression upon my eyes. The Lord was clothed in purple, and the vision lasted a quarter of an hour. That same night the eyes of my internal man were opened, and fitted to see things in heaven, in the world of spirits, and in hell, in which places I found many persons of my acquaintance, some of them long since, and others lately deceased.’

It is not peculiar to any individual to mistake for supernatural, that which may be accounted for according to known relations of cause and effect. With the vulgar, nothing is more common ; and the love of the marvellous among them is such, as to encourage the most strange and crude relations of their experiences, which wiser men sometimes believe, or turn to account. Visions among the Romish saints were frequently pretended to be experienced ; and no doubt men of no less philosophical minds than Swedenborg's have had their share of visions, which if narrated would be equally as credible as those of our author. In the case before us, it would seem that Swedenborg gave too ready admission to impressions, which to those who are unprepared for the recital of them, must appear exceedingly ludicrous ; ludicrous not in themselves so much, as for the gravity with which they are related. To us they appear to be the effect, though somewhat extraordinary, of excessive indulgence of appetite, after an unusual interval of fasting, and while, perhaps, neither the body nor the mind were sufficiently composed. Certain nervous symptoms, not unlike those described by Swedenborg, sometimes occur in cases of *dyspepsia*, or sudden indigestion. Many such are enumerated by medical writers ; namely, giddiness, noise in the ears, occasional dimness of sight, a sense of objects floating before the eyes, restlessness, unrefreshing sleep during the night, temporary absence of mind, impaired memory, &c.

To any rational man, we need assign no other cause for the first symptoms of alienation of mind, in the author, whose works we have partially examined ; it being the part of true philosophy not to seek beyond a sufficient and well ascertained cause, for any physical or intellectual phenomenon. How far the intervention of medical skill might have weaned him from the society of immortals in other regions, we cannot now determine ; but it is evident, as it may well be supposed, that finding the flesh no obstacle to soaring into the celestial spheres, and descending to the infernal abodes, he soon became so conversant with their inhabitants, that he has told as much, and probably as much truth about them, as the heathen poets did of their Elysium and their Tartarus. He is not the only one who has written dialogues of the dead ; but he is the first man in christendom, we believe, who so far imposed on himself and on others, as to create a belief,

among so many, that he was a new prophet, the author of a new dispensation, and the founder of a new church. On what such claims are grounded, it seems proper now to inquire, since we find disciples among us zealous enough to publish and inculcate the writings of their supposed prophet.

Miracles are thought to be of little value, and are treated somewhat contemptuously, by the disciples of Swedenborg. His own opinions on this subject are sufficiently manifested in the following passage from his *Arcana Cœlestia*.

‘With respect to prodigies and signs, it is to be observed, that they were performed amongst such persons as were in external worship, and were not desirous of knowing any thing about internal worship; for they who were in such worship, were to be compelled by external means; hence it was, that miracles were performed among the Israelitish and Jewish people, who were merely in external worship, and in none that was internal. It was also necessary for them to be in external worship, when they would not be in that which is internal, in order that they might represent holy things in externals, and thus that communication might be given with heaven, as by something of a church; for correspondences, representatives, and significatives conjoin the natural world to the spiritual. Hence now it was, that so many miracles were performed among that nation. But with those who are in internal worship, that is, in charity and faith, miracles are not performed, being to such persons hurtful; for miracles force or compel to believe, and whatsoever is of compulsion doth not remain, but is dissipated. The internal things of worship, which are faith and charity, ought to be implanted in freedom, for then they are appropriated; and the things which are appropriated remain. But the things which are implanted by compulsion abide without the internal man in the external; for nothing enters into the internal man except by intellectual ideas, which are reasons, the ground which receives them there being the rational principle enlightened: hence it is that no miracles are performed at this day.* That they are also of a hurtful nature, may appear from the following consideration; they compel to believe, and fix in the external man an idea that a thing is so or so; if the internal man afterwards, denies what the miracles have confirmed, then there commences an opposition and collision between the internal and external man, and at length, when the ideas produced from miracles are dissipated, the conjunction of falsehood and truth takes place, which is prophanation. Hence it is evident how dangerous and hurtful miracles would be at this day in the church, wherein the internals of worship are disclosed.

[* ‘Voilà, pourquoi votre fille est muette.’]

These things are also signified by the Lord's words to Thomas : "because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed ; blessed are they who see not and believe ;" consequently they also are blessed, who believe, not by miracles. But miracles are not hurtful to those, who are in external worship, without internal, for with such there cannot be any opposition between the internal and external man, thus no collision, and consequently no prophannation.'

We have here quoted from *Hindmarsh*, a most earnest and laborious disciple of Swedenborg ; and though there is sufficient obscurity in the passage, it is probably a much more intelligible translation from the original, than we, the uninitiated, could make. What the great prophet of the New Jerusalem church shadowed forth, the disciple whom we have just cited has pursued with zeal ; and it is amusing, if it were not more painful, to witness such overweening ardour and fanaticism of the genuine pupil of a visionary master, as we find in the following, among other passages in *Hindmarsh's* letters to Priestley :

'As former dispensations required the aid and assistance of miracles, in order to induce mankind to acknowledge them, this argues at least, that they did not carry with them that clear and rational evidence of their truth, which was of itself sufficient to gain credit among men : for wherever the truth of a thing cannot be established by any other means than by miracles, it plainly implies that it is involved in obscurity, doubt, and uncertainty. Such was the case with all former dispensations, which only *shadowed forth* and *represented* the last and most magnificent of all, the *New Jerusalem*. This last and greatest of dispensations requires no miracles, because the truths it displays are of themselves clear, rational, and satisfactory. It is too dignified to stoop down to the earth for any thing that resembles a miracle ; for by so doing, its heaven-born glory would be tarnished, and a cloud would overspread the sky, so as to interrupt the beams of celestial light, proceeding from him who is the sun of righteousness.'

Such and similar to this is the reasoning of Swedenborgians concerning miracles. We do not say in reply, that miracles are necessary to a new dispensation of divine truth, because this is begging the question at issue. But we cannot avoid saying, that the reasons assigned by Swedenborg and his followers, why they would be not only useless, but unsuitable, in evidence of the truth of the doctrines of the New Jerusalem church are, as far as they are intelligible,

exceedingly strange, if not irreverent. If by the jargon of externals and internals, be meant any thing more than the distinction between what merely regards the senses, and that which pertains exclusively to the understanding, it is too subtle and refined for our comprehension. According to our interpretation of Swedenborg's meaning, there was, it is acknowledged, much that was external in the religion of the Jewish church, though this was far from being the great *end* of its religion. But the case is far otherwise in the Christian church: what is properly external and merely significative, is but a small part of the religion of christians. And it needed neither miracles nor a new dispensation to sever the protestants from a church, much of whose corruption, as they believed, consisted in superinducing, on the simple religion of Christ, a multitude of ceremonial observances, which tended to absorb the moral and spiritual in what was merely sensible. It must be a strange conceit in any one who calls himself a christian, that for nearly eighteen centuries, all the followers of Christ had been kept in that state of degradation, in which they could perceive nothing but what was comparatively gross and mean in their religion, and could not fail to overlook every thing that was most pure, and spiritual, and elevated. Nor can we find, after all the researches we have made, that the doctrines of the New Jerusalem develop a single point of morals before unknown, or make any disputable questions in morality more clear. There is nothing, we admit in what Swedenborg professes to teach, that was worthy of miracles. Certain corruptions of Christianity he has indeed exposed, but less satisfactorily, by far, than many enlightened christians have done, who made no pretensions to inspiration, where no inspiration was requisite. Whatever is peculiar (*visions* always excepted) is merely speculative, and to our dark understandings, often absurd. Of how much regard his visions are worthy, we mean presently to show.

It is not our business to reply to any fanatical followers of Swedenborg. But if it be a fair deduction from his writings that a divine revelation is degraded by the miracles that accompany it; that all the beneficent acts of our Saviour, which transcended human power; that above all, his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension to heaven, are so many blots and stains on the character of our holy religion,

we are willing to give them all the benefit of their arguments, without attempting to answer them.

Further, we cannot admit the truth of the assertion, even if it were not profane, that the intervention of miracles implies a want of clear and rational evidence of the doctrines which they are intended to maintain. We can easily conceive how difficult it is to excite the attention of mankind to a system of religion, which militates against errors long cherished, and especially to convince them of truths against which their pride and ambition must be at once placed in powerful array. Now this is the case with christianity, which, whatever may be said about *externals*, we all believe to be a spiritual religion demanding a spiritual worship. What could tend more to draw the attention of mankind to the truths it imparted, and to the divine mission of its author, than such miracles as those to which we have alluded? Surely it is not becoming in us to say, that they were unworthy of a messenger from heaven, or that they have no bearing on what was spiritual in his religion. But apart from miracles, and in relation to the comparatively *clear and rational evidence* of christianity and the *New Jerusalem*, we would ask the Swedenborgians to compare the effect of the *preaching* of Christ, and Peter, and Paul, with that of all the voluminous writing of their pretended prophet, and give us the result.

Though Swedenborg and his followers pretend to no miracles performed in attestation of his divine mission; yet there is much in what belongs to their religion of a miraculous character. Besides the visions related, pertaining to other worlds, and other beings besides man, and other states of existence, the disciples of Swedenborg have carefully transmitted several instances of his prescience, and news from the regions of the dead, which are very marvellous. We select the following accounts of his supernatural knowledge, from Hindmarsh's letters to Priestley. We have seen the same in the writings of other Swedenborgians, without any variation of facts and circumstances.

‘ 1. Count Hopken, a Swedish nobleman, has confirmed the truth of the two following transactions. After the decease of the Count De Marteville, certain persons came to demand a debt of his widow, of a considerable sum of money, that they said was due to them by her deceased husband. This she knew was not a

just debt, because it had been paid during his life-time ; yet could not tell where the acquittance or receipt was. In her trouble she applied to Mr. Swedenborg ; and understanding that he had the privilege of conversing with the deceased, requested that (if possible) he would ask her late husband where the acquittance was. On the next day Mr. Swedenborg informed her, that he had seen and spoken to her deceased husband, who told him where he had put the acquittance, and that she would find it in the particular place described. It was accordingly found in the same place ; and this account was universally known to be true both at court and at Stockholm. The queen of Sweden herself, being afterwards on a visit at Berlin, confirmed the truth of this relation to several academicians, whom she had invited to her table.'

‘ 2. The second remarkable transaction is the following. The queen dowager of Adolphus Frederick, and sister to the late king of Prussia, soon after having heard the foregoing account, and several others concerning Mr. Swedenborg, told the senator, Count Hopken, that she wished to speak to him. The Count, in going to carry the queen's orders, met Mr. Swedenborg, who was on his way to the palace, with a design to speak to that princess. After having conversed on various subjects, the queen informed him that she had lately written a letter to her brother, a prince of Prussia, who had since died. The contents of her letter, she observed, were of so secret a nature, that no person in the world had any knowledge of them, but that brother ; and she wished Mr. Swedenborg to ask him, whether he had received her letter before his death ; to which he replied that he would give her an answer in a few days. At the time appointed, Mr. Swedenborg waited on the queen, and related to her the whole contents of the said letter, word for word, [well committed to memory] at which she was struck with the greatest astonishment. He further informed her majesty that her brother had received her letter, and begun an answer to it, and that in the *escrutoire* of the prince was an unfinished letter, which he intended to have sent her before his decease. On this she sent to the king of Prussia, and the letter was found, as Mr. Swedenborg had directed, which the king sent to her. This circumstance was also publicly known at Stockholm, and much talked of out of the kingdom. The Baron, in a letter to the Landgrave of Hesse Darmstadt, dated July 13, 1771, confirms the truth of this relation, yet says, “ It is not to be accounted as any kind of miracle, but only as a memorable transaction, like those found in the work entitled *True Christian Religion*, concerning Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, and others ; which are only to be considered as evidences that, as to the spirit, I have been introduced by the Lord into the spiritual world, and that I converse both with angels and spirits.” ’

Another remarkable occurrence is, that, when Swedenborg was told, at Gottenburg, that his house was consumed in a great fire at Stockholm, he, without a possibility of hearing by the *post*, affirmed that his house was safe, and described the extent of the fire; and that in both particulars his account was verified. Another is, that, when he embarked at London for Sweden, he predicted to Captain Dixon, in order to prevent any anxiety about his supply of provisions, the very hour when he would arrive at Stockholm, which prediction was exactly fulfilled.

We should probably be as much laughed at for replying to these idle tales, as we have been diverted ourselves in reading them. There is still, we believe, among the vulgar, some remnant of belief in witchcraft and divination; and in times past there have been, in other countries, men as enlightened as those at the court of Sweden equally as infatuated, or as ready to act a part, as those who countenanced the wonderful stories we have selected. We remember, when we were children, to have heard as extraordinary instances of supernatural knowledge, in an old woman in our vicinity, as any of these which are attributed to Swedenborg. She could tell which ticket would draw the highest prize in a lottery, and where stolen goods would be found, and many other things equally marvellous.

There are some other predictions of Swedenborg, about as important as that concerning Captain Dixon's voyage, which are said to have been exactly accomplished. He is said also to have foretold the precise time of his death. None of these things however were recorded till after the events happened. But there is one prophecy of his, of more consequence than all the rest, because it has a direct bearing upon his character, as an inspired prophet, and on the propagation of his religion; and because there are now millions of men in the world, who, if the prophecy be true, will live to witness its fulfilment. We are told that, a few days before his death, an intimate friend said to him, 'In the name of God, before whom you will shortly appear, in the name of friendship, declare to me, if what you have written is the truth.' Swedenborg replied: 'My doctrine is true, it has been revealed to me; and in eighty years it will be very widely diffused.' We have no very accurate data from which we can form an estimate of the number of Swedenborg's followers; and, it should seem, there is

something of caution in his *prediction*, concerning the number. This, it may be foreseen, whatever hopes may be excited among the members of the New Jerusalem Church, in regard to the increase of believers, will give them opportunity, in the end, to make great limitations, in what now seems to imply a number *indefinitely* large, but intended to bear a comparison, far from contemptible, with the rest of the christian community.

The great burden of evidence in favour of the divine commission of Swedenborg, we are told by his disciples, is to be found in the *doctrines* of the New Jerusalem. It is therefore internal ; and it requires (if we rightly comprehend some of the full believers) something like a prior faith, to go sufficiently far into the revelations of the great prophet, to become illuminated and spiritualized. Now if it be the *doctrines* of the New Jerusalem, that claim for their immediate author a divine commission, it must be what is new, and not what was already well known. Before touching however upon any thing which is peculiar and novel in doctrine, we would first remark, that what strikes a novice in regard to the supposed new prophet with most surprise is, that he knows and imparts more, concerning what is beyond human ken, than the Son of God himself ; to say nothing of the ancient patriarchs and prophets. This is so extraordinary, that it cannot be rendered credible, but by the excellence and the practical utility of the truths revealed. The truths too should be of such a kind, that they cannot be ascribed to a fervid imagination, without the intervention of a power above. When Swedenborg tells us every where in his works—‘ This is what the Lord revealed to me on such a subject—this is what the angels said—I assisted in the heavens at a conference held in the temple of wisdom—I have been at one of the schools—I have heard such and such things debated—I heard such things decreed—I have seen in the spiritual world, Pythagoras, Socrates, Luther, Calvin, Xenophon, Sixtus Quintus, Louis XIV, Newton, Wolf, Hans Sloane, &c.’, our first feeling is not so much that of incredulity, as it is of the ludicrous. That this learned Swede, if he had not lost his wits, should talk more familiarly of Deity, and angels, and prophets, and philosophers in heaven, and of his intercourse with them, than of the occurrences and people in the dwellings and streets of Stockholm, is

so wonderful, that no slight evidence can persuade us of its truth.

To a large proportion of our readers, probably, we shall communicate something new, by selecting some passages from Swedenborg's visions. For, if we mistake not, his followers are not, either in their writings or conversation, very apt to acquaint us with many of the minute particularities contained in them, concerning the spiritual and celestial world.

In his vision concerning *creation*, he heard a dialogue between the *Satans*, upon God and nature ; in which they maintain that ' God is but a name, if, by that name, nature is not intended.' We present our readers an abridgement of it.

' At their own desire those Satans are permitted to mount from the darkness of hell into the world of spirits, which holds the middle place between heaven and hell. Two angels descended from heaven to sustain the dispute, and *I was present there*. "Ye simple ones," says one of the infernal spirits, "with your belief in God!" And then he goes on with his argument to identify God and nature, though the scriptures tell us, the devils believe there is one God, and tremble. The angels made a reply, which it must have puzzled the Satans exceedingly to understand, and we are not told what effect it produced. He next tells us of another Satan who came from hell into the world of spirits with a prostitute, and gives a disgusting dialogue, in which it appears that these personages had no notion of lawful wedlock. After a conversation, which proved that the Satan knew neither what he was, nor what he had been, and that he had forgotten he had lived and died on earth, and that he had not heard any thing in the world of spirits ; ' I tried,' says Swedenborg, ' to recall it to him, to speak to him of God, of angels, of heaven ; he fled, laughing immoderately, and treating me like a fool.

' Then an angel approached me and said, "Your meditations and discourses on creation have gained you great applause, and secured your reception into our society ; I will now show you the figurative type of the creation and teach you how God created animals and vegetables of every kind." ' The angel then conducted his guest to an immense verdant plain, where he saw successively all kinds of birds and beasts, and fruit-trees and fruits, and shrubs and flowers, and trees of the forest, &c. &c. The vision then continues :

' All these objects you have seen, says my guide, are so many correspondences of the affections of love of the angels about you ; and he made me know the affection to which every thing

corresponded, assuring me that every thing which struck their eyes—houses, utensils, tables, food, garments, metals, precious stones, that every thing in fine was a correspondence to the angels, and enabled them to know the internal state of each other. By this type, he added, you may see the creation of the universe. God is love and wisdom ; the affections of that love, the perceptions of that wisdom are infinite ; and all created objects upon earth are correspondences of those affections and perceptions. Correspondences, like those of our natural world, exist also in the spiritual world for angels, who receive the God of love and wisdom ; with this difference, that the correspondences of the spiritual world are created at the moment, according to the interior of the angels, and that in the natural world they were created at the beginning, so as to be renewed by generation and reproduction. In our world it is instantaneous, and in yours it is durable, by means of generation ; because the lands and atmospheres of our world are spiritual, and the lands and atmospheres of yours are natural. Natural *gold* was created to conceal spiritual, like the skin to cover the body, bark the trees, &c. In the hells, objects are seen opposed, which are correspondences of the affections of evil, and of perceptions of falses, &c. &c. As we conversed about the hells, the noise and odour which proceeded thence began to annoy us, and the angel quitted me, after having enjoined it upon me to publish on earth, what I had seen and heard in the spiritual world.’

Our readers are here introduced to the doctrine of correspondences, which forms so distinguishing a part of the theory of the New Jerusalem. But before we proceed farther on this subject, we cannot forbear selecting a few short specimens more of the visions and supernatural communications to be found in the writings of Swedenborg, which we think will go far to settle the weight of internal evidence in favour of the truth of his new doctrines.

In his vision concerning heaven, among other things, he says ;

‘ The new-comers were conducted into different quarters of the celestial city, and were shown an auditory, a public library, books, paper, ink, quills, manuscripts, and scribes who copied them, museums, colleges and literary exercises, officers, governors, artists and various works. Virgins brought them presents of stuffs embroidered and woven with their own hands. As they departed they sung to them, after an angelic mode, an ode which expressed the affections and thoughts which corresponded to the use of the presents they made.’

Again.

‘During my meditation I was transported in spirit into a celestial society, placed at the left, towards the east, of which Pope *Sixtus Quintus* is the chief. In our conversation, he told me that his society was composed of the most judicious and reasonable among the catholics, and that he had been placed at their head in the heavens, for having believed, six months before his death, that the pretence of the pope being the vicar of Jesus Christ was an invention of the pontiffs, to gratify their lust of domination. He told me, in fine, and enjoined it on me to announce it to men on earth, that those who maintained a faith contrary to that he had now declared, would become dolts in the world of spirits; that after some time they would be united to those like them, and would fall into the hells, where they would become maniacs, living like beasts, while they would think themselves gods. I did not conceal from him that these things appeared to me very hard to be published. Write them, he replied, I will subscribe them, because it is the truth. Immediately rejoining his society, he subscribed a paper containing those assertions, and sent it as a bull to those of his former communion on earth.’

Once more :

‘One day,’ says Swedenborg, in his vision relating to writing in heaven, ‘while I meditated on celestial truth, a leaf of paper written in Hebrew characters, like those of the ancients, was sent to me from heaven; the lines appeared to me curved, and full of accents placed above the letters. The angels around me said, that by a single letter they grasped the whole sense; that they discerned it especially in the curves of the lines, and the flexion of accents, of which they explained to me the different significations, according as they were joined or separate. They told me that the letter *H*. added to the names of Abraham and Sarah, signified infinite and eternal. They explained to me by the letters alone the true sense of a verse in one of the psalms. They taught me further, that the writing of the third heaven was composed of letters differently inclined, each of which contained one sense; that the vowels served there only for the sound corresponding to the affection, and that, in this heaven, they could not pronounce the vowels *i* and *e* [the German *i* and *e* we suppose] but in their place *y* and *eu*. They told me that the vowels *a*, *o* and *u* were, on account of their full sound, used in the third heaven, and that there were no harsh consonants employed there; every thing there is sweet, and hence it is that many Hebrew letters in use

there are pointed internally, to indicate that they are to be pronounced with sweetness. These angels added, that harshness of letters and of pronunciation might exist in the spiritual heaven, whose inhabitants are in the truth, but not in the third heaven, whose inhabitants are in the good, or in love.'

Such, and a great deal more, similar to these examples, are the visions of Emanuel Swedenborg. They are often very minute in the dialogue, giving the names and the exact words of the interlocutors, and very minute details of persons, and employments, and administration in the spiritual world. Some of the visions are ingenious and amusing fables, and some of them are too doting or childish even to deserve this character. We have given these specimens without searching for those which are most improbable or most frivolous. But they are such, it seems to us, as completely justify the first impressions which every rational man receives, from being made acquainted with the grounds on which a prophetic character is claimed for their author. We say *first impressions*, because the disciples of Swedenborg allow, that the writings of their great teacher do not always, if ever, approve themselves to the judgment and understanding of a novice. They tell us we must read and read, till our spiritual man is enlightened. We do not profess to have searched very deeply into the mysteries of this new faith ; but from what progress we have made, it seems to us that the reader must either be more and more wearied and disgusted as he advances, or, after being awhile bewildered in the mazes which lie between sense and nonsense, become as visionary and brainsick as the apostle of the New Jerusalem church himself. Now if these spiritual visions be the basis of all the spiritual knowledge of Swedenborg, which will not be denied by his followers, since it would take away the only proof on which they can rest, it may be safely presumed, that the great body of readers will regard them as so utterly unworthy of a supernatural origin, that they are not bound to examine any of the theories and dogmas that are founded upon them.

Among the most remarkable theories and dreams of Swedenborg, are those concerning *correspondences*, particularly as connected with the *internal sense of scripture*, and *Heaven and Hell*.

The *science of correspondences*, as it is technically called, is the key which unlocks the internal or spiritual sense, and thus

exposes all the genuine and before hidden treasures of the word of God. Science, as it is called, however, it is of the most flexible kind ; and while it arrogates to itself a uniform character, and one perfectly distinct from every thing else, it is at different times *analogy, allegory, type, parable, metaphor*, or any thing else, which can help out an ingenious theory. It seems to us, however, for the most part, to be founded sometimes in known, and sometimes in imaginary analogies, between the natural and spiritual world ; and to a certain extent it is neither new nor abhorrent from reason. But when it goes so far as to tell us that the spiritual always answers in form to the natural ; that the material and spiritual world is a great man with all his parts ; that God exists in a human shape ; that the spiritual sun answers to the natural, and cheers with its radiant beams the celestial inhabitants ; in fine, that every substance on earth has its corresponding spiritual substance in the heavens ; we are presented either with a shadowy and unsatisfying fiction, or with one which we cannot divest of gross materialism throughout. Alike fanciful, if it be pressed far, is the supposed correspondence existing between the body of a man, in all its parts, and his soul or spirit ; and no less so that which is maintained to exist between the letter and spirit in the writings of the Old and New Testament. It is here that the science of correspondences becomes chiefly important, since it develops the internal sense, which it is so essential to know ; though the first christians, and the most enlightened in all succeeding ages, till the time of Swedenborg, were too simple, too much in the infancy of knowledge, to comprehend any thing about it.

That our readers may have some notion of this all-important doctrine of correspondences, so far as it purports to evolve the internal sense, we shall just touch on its history and application.

On the authority of Swedenborg we are told, that the doctrines of correspondences was well known to the ancients, who deemed it the first of sciences, and wrote all their books according to its principles. The book of Job he asserts to be full of correspondences, and tells us that they also pervade the Egyptian hieroglyphics, and the fabulous stories of antiquity. The ceremonials and statues too belonging to the different religions of the ancients, were nothing but correspondences. All the rights and festivals of the Israelitish church,

and the outward acts and the vestments of the priests were of the same kind. ‘And, inasmuch as divine things fix their existence in outward nature in correspondences, therefore the word was written by mere correspondences; for whatever proceedeth from the Divinity, when it comes into outward nature, manifests itself in such outward things as correspond with what is divine; which outward things become the repositories of divine things, otherwise called celestial and spiritual, that lie contained within them in a hidden and mysterious manner.’

We are told farther, by Swedenborg, how the science of correspondences, which was so extensively known and understood by the ancients, and which was long preserved among the Asiatics, particularly the wise men and divines, was in process of time obscured, and at length totally lost. It began at first to be corrupted by the idolatrous and magical application of the representative rites of the church. What is most remarkable of all, the Israelites and Jews, whose divine worship is said to have consisted entirely of correspondences representing heavenly things, had no knowledge of a single thing represented, since ‘they were mere natural men, and therefore had neither inclination nor ability to gain any understanding of spiritual and celestial subjects. For the same reason they were necessarily ignorant of correspondences, these being representations of things spiritual and celestial in things natural.’

Further, we are informed how the idolatries of the Gentiles had their origin in the science of correspondences. ‘The ancients, who were versed in this science, made themselves images which corresponded with things celestial, and were delighted with them, because they could discern in them what related to heaven and the church, and therefore they placed those images both in their temples and in their houses, not with any intention to worship them, but to serve as a means of recollecting the celestial things signified by them.’ These positions are illustrated by particular instances, which, as far as we can discern, have nothing to do with the science of correspondences, or any other science. There is nothing of discovery in the fact announced, that the hieroglyphics of the Egyptians are founded in some analogy subsisting between the sign and what is signified; nor in the other fact, that the sensible objects which came to be worshipped as idols, were sig-

nificative of moral qualities ; but it is the mere affectation of science to arrange these facts under a name, which is intended to give an imposing character to the theory of a new religion.

Lastly, in this historical account, we come to the writings of the New Testament.

‘ The reason,’ says Swedenborg, ‘ why the science of correspondences, which is the true key to the spiritual sense of the word, was not discovered to later ages, was, because the christians of the primitive church were men of such great simplicity, that it was to no purpose to discover it to them ; for, had it been discovered, they would have found no use in it, nor would they have understood it. After those first ages of christianity, there arose thick clouds of darkness, which overspread the whole christian world, first in consequence of many heretical opinions propagated in the church, and soon after in consequence of the decrees and determinations in the council of Nice, concerning the existence of three divine persons from eternity, and concerning the person of Christ, as the son of Mary, and not as the son of Jehovah God. Hence sprung the present faith of justification, in which three Gods are approached and worshipped, according to their respective orders, and on which depend all and every thing belonging to the present church, as the members of the body depend on the head. And because men applied every part of the word to confirm this erroneous faith, therefore the spiritual sense could not be discovered ; for, had it been discovered, they would have applied it also to the confirmation of the same faith, and thereby would have profaned the very holy word, and thus would have shut up heaven entirely against themselves, and have removed the Lord from the church.’

That the science of correspondences was known to the ancients, is a favourite part of Swedenborg’s theory on this subject ; and in his vision which relates to it, the Grecian sages in heaven put the most learned and enlightened christians to shame for their ignorance of that in their religion, which it was mainly important for them to know. And it is a position no less extraordinary, that through the whole period of the Hebrew church, nothing of consequence was known concerning those dispensations of heaven which were expressly designed and calculated for a peculiar people ; that nothing was understood by the Hebrews, but what terminated in mere external ceremony, and that their religion answered no great moral purpose in regard to their indi-

vidual state. Were such vagaries worthy of a reply, we might ask whether any man in his sense can believe that God, a God of infinite wisdom, could thus trifle with his rational offspring. We might more reasonably suppose him to impart a new animal sense, to correct the imperfections of those already given, or a new language, to shew that those now in existence are incapable of conveying any thing intelligible, than we can conceive that he has chosen a new messenger, to explain his word in a way that was never dreamed of, (or *only* dreamed of,) after it had been the prescribed rule of life to millions of intelligent beings, in successive ages of the world, who had founded upon it all their hopes of immortality, and drawn from it all their consolation, amidst the trials and vicissitudes of life.

If any thing were wanting to convince us of the extreme absurdity of what is denominated the science of correspondences in the New Jerusalem Church, the deficiency might be made up by an attention to the manner in which it is applied. Let one example suffice. In the vocabulary of this church, *horse* invariably signifies the *understanding*, and *chariot* means *doctrine*.

‘That such,’ says Swedenborg, ‘was the signification of chariot and horse, was perfectly well known in the ancient churches, for those churches were representative churches, and with the people thereof the science of correspondences and representations was the chief of all sciences. From those churches the signification of horse, as expressive of the understanding, was derived to the wise men round about, even to Greece. Hence it was, when they would describe the sun, in which they placed the God of their wisdom and intelligence, that they attributed to it a chariot and four horses of fire. And when they would describe the rise of the sciences from understanding, that they also feigned a winged horse, which with its hoof broke open a fountain, at which were nine virgins called the sciences; for from the ancient church they received this knowledge, that by horse is signified the understanding, by wings spiritual truth, by hoof what is scientific from the understanding, and by fountain doctrine from which sciences are derived. Nor is any thing else signified by the Trojan horse, than artifice or cunning exercised by their understanding in destroying the walls. Indeed, in our day, when the understanding is described after the manner received from those ancients, it is usual to figure it by a flying horse, or pegasus; so likewise doc-

trine is described by a fountain, and the sciences by virgins ; but scarce any one knows, that by horse, in the mystic sense, is signified the understanding ; still less that those significatives were derived from the ancient representative churches to the gentiles.’

That the range of this boasted science is circumscribed by no narrow limits, may be readily inferred from the strange, roving fancy, which is manifested in this extract. Indeed, by examination, it will be found that it extends through the three great kingdoms of nature. The name of every animal stands for some corresponding affection ; trees and plants, whether individually, or in groves and gardens, represent some good or truth pertaining to the church ; and every metal and precious stone, and indeed the whole mineral kingdom, is significative of something moral or spiritual.

Great delight is expressed by the disciples of Swedenborg at his account of the spiritual world, and the wonders he unfolds concerning things invisible. He saw and heard, and acquainted himself with, what before him, ‘ eye had not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived.’ The spiritual world, according to his account, is composed of heaven, of the world of spirits, and of hell. There are three heavens, the celestial, the spiritual, and the inferior. Each, as a whole, and in its parts, corresponds to the form of a man ; and the whole heavens, collectively, correspond to the parts of the human body. The superior or celestial heaven is the head ; the spiritual or second heaven extends from the neck to the knees ; and the inferior heaven forms the arms, even to the extremities of the fingers, and the legs to the soles of the feet. In heaven, we learn from the same source, are waters, groves, lands, palaces, gardens, cities, houses, animals, fruits, precious stones, gold, garments, in fine every thing we see on earth ; with this difference, that the things of heaven are of a spiritual substance, more perfect in form and corresponding to the state of angels. In heaven also there are governments, employments, offices, amusements, divine worship, travels, ranks, conditions of life civil and domestic, corresponding to the angelic state.

The world of spirits is a place, or rather a state between heaven and hell ; where every one goes as soon as he is dead. There every one is judged and thence ascends to heaven, or descends to hell ; but those who go thither, remain for dif-

ferent periods of time, whether at their own option or not, we are not told. Some remain but a short time, others several years, though none pass in it more than thirty years. This reminds us of a story told by Erasmus, concerning a Romish ecclesiastic of some rank, who, after his death, should have been prayed out of purgatory by some of the priests. Having neglected their duty, they were censured by a prelate for the omission, in presence of a servant of the deceased, who entreated the prelate to give himself no uneasiness, for his master was of so restless a disposition, that he never spent, in one place, more than time enough to take a glass of wine.

Swedenborg describes hell as exhibiting the appearances of vast holes or gulfs illuminated by a light that resembles burning coals. The eyes of the infernal spirits are fitted to that false light, so that when they withdraw from their caverns, they are grievously tormented by the celestial light. Again the abodes of hell appear like caves placed obliquely, or the subterraneous passages of mines, and to these are added many disgusting particulars which may as well be passed by. 'I have not,' says Swedenborg, 'seen all the societies of the infernal regions, but God *favoured* me with the sight of many of them; and it was told me that as the entire heaven represented a man, so the whole hell represented a devil.'

The punishment of those in hell is represented with sufficient probability to consist in there being tormented by the same vicious inclinations and wicked passions, which they felt and indulged upon earth. But here again, in the details there are the same whimsical inventions of imagination that we have so often adverted to on other subjects. The wicked spirits seek for pleasures, honours, and riches, and obtain them, and lose them; they sit here and there, sad and solitary; they are hungry and have nothing to eat; they enter into cottages where they beg to live, and where they seek for occupations, which they obtain and abandon. Pursued by their master, they take refuge in some cavern, there to appease their hunger; the door is shut upon them; the master tells them they shall not escape, and unless they labour, they shall have neither food nor clothing. If they commit any fault, they are trampled in the dust, and miserably tormented.

From this account, slight and general indeed, but faithful as far as it proceeds, who would imagine himself conducted

to the *spiritual* world? Every thing is made present by poetical creation, and in some measure familiar to us ; the persons, indeed, appear somewhat strange to us ; not much more strange however than foreigners of our own hemisphere ; and every thing seems natural, and not much unlike what we have commonly been accustomed to, saving that in heaven, it is more splendid and glowing than any of the objects, and scenes, and landscapes, which we witness on earth. Nothing reminds us of a *spiritual world*, but the perpetual recurrence of the words, and the constantly repeated assertion that, though the beings, and scenes, and substances are all such as we here behold, yet they are still spiritual. No sort of relative connexions between individuals and societies are unknown. Weddings have been witnessed by Swedenborg in heaven, and illicit love in hell. And though the union of the sexes in heaven is represented as consisting of the most pure and elevated affections, yet it is described in terms of such rapturous delight, and depending so entirely upon the distinctions of sex, that it seems to differ little from a virtuous and refined state of wedlock in this terrestrial world. In what then does the heaven of Swedenborg differ materially from the heavenly paradise of Mahomet ? In the christian scriptures a cloud hangs over the future, which does not indeed destroy our curiosity, but which makes our hopes and our conceptions obscure and imperfect, as they ever must be, concerning a state of being we have never witnessed, and whence no traveller has returned. ‘It doth not yet appear what we shall be :’ this however is the dead letter, and Swedenborg finds the internal sense to be—It doth *now* appear what we shall be. ‘In heaven they are neither married nor given in marriage :’ of this the internal sense is, that marriages are *frequent* in heaven, celebrated with splendour and enjoyed with rapture. It is not possible, we affirm, in our state of being, to conceive of such representations, without sensual images ; without having a material world brought to view, newly decorated indeed, and tricked out with an ornate drapery worthy of a fabulous age ; but essentially the same as that in which we now *live and move*.

Waving the difference of character between the two pretended prophets, and allowing that Swedenborg was self-deceived, and that Mahomet was a wicked impostor, which we think is doing justice to both ; there appears to be no

essential difference in the evidence with which their revelations are accompanied. Mahomet, as well as Swedenborg, admitted the inspiration of Moses, and the authority of the Pentateuch, and of the prophetic writings; and also acknowledged the divine mission of Christ, and the truth of the christian scriptures. Mahomet claimed to be commissioned to purify these former dispensations from their corruptions, and as the last and greatest prophet, to communicate divine instruction to mankind. Swedenborg professed to be instructed from heaven to exalt what was low in our conceptions of the Jewish and Christian religions, and to unfold that which, though comprising their most valuable contents, was before unknown. Both think rather meanly of the miracles of Moses and of Christ. The Mahometan accounts the Koran itself as a perpetual miracle, and the greatest of miracles; the Swedenborgian esteems the inspiration discovered in the writings of his prophet, and the intercourse which he held with the spiritual world, too dignified to be placed in competition with the greatest miracles that were ever wrought.

The remarks made by Mr. White, in his Bampton Lectures, concerning Mahomet's representations of another life, apply with no material variation to Swedenborg's account of the spiritual world. 'He (Mahomet) generally descends to an unnecessary minuteness and particularity in his representations of another life, which excite disgust and ridicule, instead of reverence: and even his most animated descriptions of the joys of paradise, or the torments of hell, however strong and glowing the colours in which they are painted, are yet far inferior in point of true sublimity, and far less calculated to promote the interests of piety by raising the hopes and alarming the fears of rational beings, than that degree of obscurity in which the future life of the gospel is still involved, and those more general terms in which its promises and threatenings are proposed to mankind.'

One remark has forced itself upon us, in our examination of the writings of Swedenborg and his disciples, that they turn what is just enough as a rhetorical comparison into a proposition of logical truth. We have no objection to comparing the radiance of truth to the radiance of light, nor to likening the progress of the understanding to the progress of the horse. These figures of speech, though good taste forbids their being harped on, are extremely excusable, particularly in

young writers. The evil is to turn this into a foundation for grammatical interpretation, to say because truth is *like* the sun, that wherever the sun is mentioned in an ancient author, truth is meant ; and that when he speaks of chariots and horses, he does not mean chariots and horses, but doctrines and tenets ; and that what the honest reader had taken for a four legged animal is after all a great theological mystery. Moreover, if we may here waste an argument, this said doctrine of correspondences seems quite shallow and drawn up with very little skill. If every thing here has a correspondence with higher things, and the horse and chariots, the trees and rivers of this world mean doctrines, and science, and understanding, and good ; what do the truth, and science, and good, which are here, correspond to ? Because all these things to a certain degree exist, as well as horses and trees ; and having assigned your spiritual ideas as correspondences to earthly chariots and horses, what have you left to correspond to earthly reason, judgment, conscience. For instance, in interpretation, let us grant that the ‘chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof’ has nothing to do with the miraculous event, which actually was taking place, or with a real vision, but refers to some mystical notions of doctrine and knowledge. What then will you do with ‘every prudent man dealeth with knowledge ;’* to what does that correspond ? Or is the system timid and pusillanimous, seeking correspondences where they are convenient, and shrinking from a thorough work ?

We have devoted more of our pages than we first intended, to a subject which some of our readers may think undeserving of so much attention. When we began our remarks, we were disposed to believe the doctrine of the New Jerusalem rather a harmless delusion, except as it regards those who profess to be, or expect to become, teachers of the christian religion ; a harmless delusion, we mean, to the individual who embraces it, for we are far from admitting the innocence of error. Solitary instances there may be of persons of a peculiar temperament, who by superadding to the simple doctrines and plain moral precepts of Christ, a religion of the imagination, attain to a state of serenity, of cheerfulness, and of hope, amidst all the vicissitudes of this mortal life, far beyond what falls to the lot of most good christians. But we must be careful how we admit this as an argument ; for

* Prov. xiii. 16.

such a religion is not far removed from one that consists in raptures, and ecstasies, and perpetual revelations, and borders on madness.

If, in the course of our remarks, there be any seeming want of courtesy towards the members of the New Jerusalem, or any disregard to their feelings, we can truly affirm that nothing of this kind was intended. We are happy in this place to declare, that we have known those of this communion (who are now beyond the reach of our praise or blame, but who, if living, we should be most loth to wound) in whom, we believe, resided spirits as pure, as amiable, and as exalted, as humanity admits. And we still know many of the same communion, who merit similar praise. Our prepossessions therefore in a great portion of individual examples have been in favour of the benign influence of this new doctrine, though we have never deemed them sufficiently numerous to establish a general conclusion.

In the little progress that this new doctrine has made in our country, and throughout the christian world, we perceive no occasion for alarm. If we have given an account sufficiently full and fair of what is peculiar to it, it must be evident, we think, that it is a religion suited to a few and a few only. Such vagaries, as make up a great part of the scheme, can never take possession of a well balanced mind; and so great is the demand which they make on our credulity, that the proselyting brethren of the new church generally begin their operations, by recommending to the inquirer such of the writings of Swedenborg, as are least likely to excite merriment or disgust. His expositions of the commonly received doctrines of christianity, in many cases, seem to us the most probable, and in many they appear very irrational and absurd. But, as we before remarked, it is what is peculiar in his views of religion that chiefly concerns us, and furnishes the true ground to try his exalted pretensions. If in this trial he is not found wanting, we must give up all title to sound judgment in weighing evidence, and with it all anxiety about the progress of error, superstition, and fanaticism; for if the understanding of all mystery and all knowledge is to be attained in dreams and visions only, who would not abstract himself from the world, and commune by day and by night with beings all pure, and perfect, and wise, in the world of spirits?